

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 ICA-20 INR-10 NSAE-00 AID-05 AF-10
ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 OES-07 SS-15
NSF-02 EB-08 COME-00 /141 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3257

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 19092

NESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, TGEN, UNESCO

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE U.S. DELEGATION
TO THE UNESCO CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL
STANDARDIZATION OF STATISTICS ON SCIENCE AND TECH-
NOLOGY

1. CONFERENCE ATTENDED BY 38 COUNTRIES. VOTES
REPRESENTED AS FOLLOWS: OECD COUNTRIES ABOUT 42
PERCENT; LDC'S ABOUT 42 PERCENT; EASTERN BLOCK ABOUT
15 PERCENT. HALF OF LDC'S WERE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST.
2. CONFERENCE ELECTED FOLLOWING OFFICERS: CHAIRMAN -
C. E. FALK (USA); VICE CHAIRMEN: K. O. LEONG (MALAYSIA),
G. EL HEFNI (EGYPT); RAPPOREUR: K. MESSMAN (AUSTRIA).
3. ABOUT 120 AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED TO DRAFT RECOMMEN-
DATIONS DEVELOPED BY UNESCO SECRETARIAT. OF THESE ABOUT
45 PERCENT WERE ADOPTED. HOWEVER, OF THE ADOPTED AMEND-
MENTS ONLY ABOUT ONE-THIRD WERE OF SIGNIFICANT SUBSTAN-
TIVE NATURE. ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF THE U.S. SPONSORED
AMENDMENTS WERE ADOPTED; OF THESE ONE-THIRD REPRESENTED
SIGNIFICANT CHANGES.

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4. CONFERENCE SEEMED TO HAVE TWO HIDDEN AGENDA OBJEC-
TIVES: ACCEPTANCE OF CURRENTLY USED UNESCO R&D STATIS-
TICS ITEMS AND DEFINITIONS AND INTRODUCTION OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY STATISTICS OUTSIDE THE R&D REALM, PRI-
MARILY FOR USE BY LDC'S.
5. -- UNESCO SECRETARIAT INTERVENED AND LOBBIED EXTEN-
SIVELY TO MAINTAIN R&D STATISTICS IN FORM CURRENTLY

USED BY IT. ONLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ADOPTED INTRODUCED BY USA. FIRST INVOLVED ACCEPTANCE OF R&D, BASIC RESEARCH, APPLIED RESEARCH, EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT DEFINITIONS CONSISTENT WITH THOSE USED BY OECD, EEC AND ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES. THIS SHOULD LEAD TO BETTER COMPARABILITY BETWEEN UNESCO AND OECD DATA. THE SECOND EXPANDS PRODUCTIVE SECTOR REPORTING FROM HIGHLY AGGREGATED SIX ONE-DIGIT ISIC GROUPS TO A CONSIDERABLY LARGER NUMBER OF TWO-DIGIT GROUPS. THIS WILL MAKE INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL R&D ACTIVITY ANALYSES CONSIDERABLY MORE MEANINGFUL. THIRD INVOLVES USE OF CLASSIFICATIONS OF SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS BY CURRENT OCCUPATION AND CURRENT CEF ACTIVE ECONOMIC STATUS INSTEAD OF ORIGINAL FIELD OF TRAINING AND TOTAL STOCK, GIVING BETTER INDICATION OF CURRENT TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES. THIS IMPROVEMENT WILL ALSO BE OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO LDC'S.

-- OTHER MAJOR US INITIATIVE FOR BETTER COMPARABILITY WAS PROPOSAL TO HAVE TWO TYPES OF SECTORING TAXONOMIES - ONE SUITABLE FOR MARKET ORIENTED ECONOMIES, THE OTHER FOR PLANNED ECONOMIES (SIMILAR TO PRACTICE NOW USED IN STANDARD NATIONAL ACCOUNTS). BOTH RUSSIANS AND US AND MANY OECD DELEGATIONS AGREED THAT CURRENT UNESCO

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PRACTICE TO USE ONE COMPROMISE SECTOR TAXONOMY PRODUCES DATA OF VERY LIMITED COMPARISON UTILITY. HOWEVER, AFTER EXTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS BY SECRETARIAT AGAINST THIS CHANGE, AMENDMENT WAS DEFEATED.

6 -- INTRODUCTION OF S&T STATISTICS BEYOND R&D AREA SEEMED PREMATURE FOR TWO REASONS: A) AREA SELECTED BY UNESCO INVOLVES SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES (STS) WHICH MANY DELEGATIONS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WERE NOT AT ALL SURE WOULD BE MOST USEFUL TO LDC'S; LDC'S AT CONFERENCE DID NOT SEEM TO KNOW WHAT THEY NEEDED, AND UNESCO SEEMS TO HAVE INADEQUATELY SURVEYED AND CONSULTED THEM OR INDUSTRIAL NATIONS ON NEED OR FEASIBILITY. B) NATIONS EXPERIENCED IN S&T STATISTICS CONCEIVE GREAT TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES IN DEVELOPING STS DATA AS PROPOSED BY UNESCO. IN ADDITION, DELEGATIONS WERE MOSTLY MADE UP OF PRODUCERS, AS COMPARED TO USERS, OF DATA, THUS UNSURE OF NEED AND RELUCTANT TO ADD WORKING LOAD.

-- CONSEQUENTLY, CONFERENCE VERY RELUCTANT TO RECOMMEND INITIATION NOW OF COLLECTION OF STS STATISTICAL STANDARDS OR DATA COLLECTIONS. RECOMMENDED UNESCO DATA UNCLASSIFIED

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COLLECTION EFFORTS FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS BE LIMITED TO R&D STATISTICS WHILE PROGRAM OF STUDY AND EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS WITH MEMBER NATIONS BE CARRIED OUT TO DETERMINE NEED, INTEREST AND FEASIBILITY OF VARIOUS TYPES OF NON-R&D S&T STATISTICS. BASED ON PROPOSED STUDY PROGRAM, STANDARDS FOR SUCH STATISTICS TO BE PROPOSED SEVERAL YEARS FROM NOW FOR UNESCO COLLECTION NO EARLIER THAN FIVE YEARS FROM NOW.

7. CONFERENCE REQUIRED EIGHT DAYS, WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY TWO TO THREE DAYS WITH BETTER PRE-CONFERENCE PLANNING AND MORE PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES BY UNESCO SECRETARIAT.

8. CONFERENCE SHOWED RELATIVELY LITTLE POLITICAL OVERTONES AND GENERALLY REFLECTED FRIENDLY INTERACTIONS AMONG DELEGATIONS.
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